



STAYING CONNECTED

Byte-sized tips and hints for volunteers
in Broadband for Seniors kiosks

BROADBAND FOR SENIORS

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experience on the Web.



INTRODUCTION

Volunteers in Broadband for Seniors kiosks come from all walks of life. But they have a common goal – to help older Australians discover a whole new social experience on the Web.

This is a complex task because they are working with Australians aged 50 years and over – whose needs and ability to use technology vary widely.

While it's generally accepted that learning to use technology is an important part of active ageing – this is not necessarily easy to achieve. BFS volunteers bring with them their own experience, skills and knowledge, as do older Australians. Naturally, there are some barriers to overcome along the way.

About this book

This book is an easy-to-use guide for Broadband for Seniors volunteers to help them reach their goals. Individual chapters can be printed off to keep the overall printing costs down. More specifically, the guide addresses:

- » the individual needs of older Australians in terms of tutoring support
- » the diversity of available technologies, devices and Internet services
- » health factors that affect older Australians, both cognitive and physical
- » the shifting skills base of senior Australians
- » the social and cultural diversity of senior Australians.

It also includes information on the best ways to recruit and retain volunteers and to market your Broadband for Seniors kiosk to the local community.

There are case studies that demonstrate good practice and the valuable work that is taking place now in the many Broadband for Seniors kiosks around Australia.



It's important to get the
right people with the
right skills for the work
that needs doing.



1 FINDING AND KEEPING VOLUNTEERS

Overview

Volunteers in the Broadband for Seniors (BFS) kiosks offer their time and energy to support seniors to use new technology. They play a vital role in the success of the kiosks. So it's important to get the right people with the right skills for the work that needs doing.

By acknowledging and recognising their contribution you can make a big difference to how volunteers feel about their work. Satisfied volunteers who enjoy their work are the key to a successful kiosk.

Volunteers bring energy, new skills, abilities and a fresh perspective. Supporting volunteers can be a rewarding experience as you share their joy and satisfaction. You get to witness their personal development, see them move to rewarding careers or make friends that can last a lifetime. However, it can also be challenging as you deal with different personalities and with the different reasons people have for volunteering.

Aim for diversity in recruiting volunteers. Having a mix of volunteers from different age groups and backgrounds that reflects the diversity in our communities is a great advertisement for your service.

In this chapter, we will explore ways to find the right volunteers and then ways to keep your volunteers engaged and enjoying their work.

What you will learn

This chapter explores ways to:

- » identify the most suitable volunteers for your kiosk
- » understand how and where to find them
- » pinpoint the best ways to support different volunteers
- » discover ways to recognise and appreciate volunteers
- » know where to go for more information.

Identify volunteer roles

When recruiting volunteers, be clear about what the work will involve. Make a list of the roles you currently have and what roles you would like to create that would improve your program.

Currently there are three main roles in the Broadband for Seniors kiosks:

- » kiosk hosts
- » kiosk administrators
- » volunteer tutors.

Think laterally about the tasks that volunteer staff could perform in your kiosk; for example, marketing, recruiting, administration, event coordination, relationship development and/or media liaison.

Be flexible and think about what potential volunteers might prefer. Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) data show that volunteers want roles that are flexible, require shorter hours or a shorter-term commitment. Volunteers are now more likely to spend shorter periods of time in multiple roles.

Develop clear position descriptions

A clear position description helps to ensure that both you and your volunteers understand the size and nature of the work you are asking them to do. It's a document that will help you conduct a fair review of volunteers' performance and it also protects the rights of the volunteer.

A position description doesn't need to be long or complex, but should include:

- » a clear description of the position
- » skills and/or qualifications required (both mandatory and desirable)
- » key areas of responsibility or a list of duties
- » key relationships; for example, supervision
- » conditions of the role; for example, attendance times, required training.

Check out the position description example at the end of this chapter.

Identifying your ideal volunteer

Take some time to identify your ideal volunteer and the skills, attitudes and approach they will need to work successfully with seniors attending your kiosk. Then target the kinds of people you are looking for.

To do this, you need to answer these questions.

- » Who would want to be a volunteer in a Broadband for Seniors kiosk?
- » Who does this role appeal to?
- » Who has time to be a volunteer in a Broadband for Seniors kiosk?
- » Who has the right skills?

Why people volunteer

There are six reasons why people donate their time as volunteers.

Here are some examples of why some people might volunteer in a Broadband for Seniors kiosk.

1 Values	Giving back to the community	They really want to improve quality of life for the seniors in their communities.
2 Understanding	Learning more about something	They want to improve their technology skills.
3 Social	Strengthening social relationships	They love meeting new people and the social aspect of volunteering.
4 Career	Gaining career-related experience	They want experience in tutoring to improve their job prospects.
5 Protective	Reducing negative feelings such as guilt	They have been personally affected by the impact of seniors not having access to technology.
6 Enhancement	Developing psychologically such as improving self-esteem	Someone asked them to volunteer and they responded to being needed.

(Clary & Snyder 1999, *The motivations to volunteer*)

Why people don't volunteer

When recruiting volunteers, it's just as important to understand why people might be reluctant to volunteer. Here are some common examples.

- » Volunteers are overloaded with work.
- » Volunteers are not respected and are badly treated.
- » Volunteers are often criticised and taken for granted.
- » Volunteering is a big commitment and you can get stuck.

By understanding these barriers, you can address them by:

- » designing flexible volunteering roles
- » having processes in place that ensure volunteers are valued and respected
- » incorporating positive messages into your recruitment campaign.

Recruiting volunteers

Once you know what you are looking for in your volunteers you can start recruiting.

Targeted recruitment is much more effective than a blanket approach. The ABS reports that only five per cent of the people they surveyed took up volunteering in response to a general media campaign such as an advertisement in the local paper.

To reach the kinds of people you are looking for, ask yourself:

1. What are the interests of this group?
2. What are they likely to read?
3. How do they like to be communicated with?
4. What are their likely reasons for volunteering?
5. Where can I find this group?
6. How can I find this group?

Here are some examples.

	Youth	Retirees
What are the interests of this group?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Friends / relationships » Keeping with trends » Themselves! » Being recognised » Making a difference in their world » Sports 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Hobbies » Family » Travelling » Reading » Good food and wine
What are they likely to read?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Social media » Text messages » Something loud, in colour, minimal words » Messages from friends 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Local paper » Flyers in their local community » Emails from family and friends » Articles in their hobby magazine, newsletter » Local newsletters
How do they like to be communicated with?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » With humour » In a relaxed way » With enthusiasm » With pictures » Not talking down to them 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » With good spelling and grammar » With detail and description » With respect » Through stories
What are the likely reasons for volunteering?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Social » Career » Values 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Values » Social » Understanding
Where to find them	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » School setting (school / University / TAFE) » Clubs / pubs » Friends' houses » Council youth lead programs » Sporting clubs » Other volunteer-based organisations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » In their local community (local clubs, nurseries) » Local U3A » Rotary, Lions, Probus, etc. » Travelling / caravanning and camping
How to find them	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Word-of-mouth campaign using current volunteers and social media » Speaking at schools / universities / TAFEs » Career expos » Though govolyunteer www.govolyunteer.com.au » Broadband for seniors website (youth will look online to check you out instantly) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> » Word-of-mouth campaign using current volunteers – <i>the ABS has found that 64% of volunteers first got involved through someone they know</i> » Talks at Rotary, U3A, local clubs » Notices on local bulletin boards e.g. library » govolyunteer websites www.govolyunteer.com.au » Broadband for seniors website

Tailor your advertisement with the interests and needs of your target group in mind. Your ad will be effective if it addresses the reasons people might be interested in volunteering as well as addressing any reservations they may have.

Remember, there are many free and low cost ways to get your message out. Here are some examples:

- » word of mouth
- » direct mail through community groups
- » information tables at community events
- » presentations to community groups such as U3A
- » flyers, posters and brochures
- » articles or press releases in local and community newspapers
- » newsletters to religious groups and local agencies and organisations
- » community service announcement
- » social media
- » websites – your own and via other community groups.

Selecting volunteers

Interviewing prospective volunteers may sound a little formal or strange but it gives you the chance to establish how capable they are of undertaking the role either immediately or with some training. It's also a chance to get a sense of their personality, background, skills, interests and availability.

During the selection process:

- » talk to them about the role
- » discuss the tasks involved
- » negotiate the amount of time they are willing to commit
- » adjust the position description, if necessary, based on their level of ability.

Matching the person with the role is the goal in the selection process. If you decide not to select a prospective volunteer make sure your reason for doing so is relevant to the requirements of the role. A relevant reason for rejection might be that the person clearly does not have the ability to achieve what's required or does not have a mandatory skill required for the role.

If you do reject a prospective volunteer, suggest volunteering opportunities with other organisations that better match their skills.

The opportunities to advertise your volunteering positions are limitless. You can be as creative as you like

Retaining volunteers

Recruitment and retention go hand in hand. If you recruit the right volunteers whose interests match the role, they are more likely to stay. If they like what they do, they are more likely to tell their friends and ask them to join too.

Support and supervision

Providing the right kind of support to volunteers is a great way to ensure they stay. The kind of support volunteers need will depend on:

- » the conditions of the role
- » their motivation for volunteering
- » their personality and circumstances
- » the nature of the role.

Well-supported staff should be able to answer ‘yes’ to the following 12 questions.

1. Do I know what is expected of me in my role in the kiosk?
2. Do I have the materials and equipment needed to do my job correctly?
3. Do I have the opportunity to do what I do best every day?
4. Have I received recognition or praise for good work recently?
5. Does the host care about me as a person?
6. Is there someone in my kiosk who encourages my development?
7. Do my opinions count?
8. Does my kiosk’s purpose make me feel like my work is important?
9. Are my co-workers committed to doing quality work?
10. Do I have a good friend in the kiosk?
11. In the last 6 months have I talked to someone about my progress?
12. Have I had opportunities at work to learn and grow in the past 12 months?

(Coffman & Buckingham 1999, First, Break All the Rules)

One way to help volunteers find the answers to these questions is with supervision.

Supervision for volunteers is about building a respectful and honest relationship. It prevents conflict and allows volunteers to flourish. It’s about creating a two-way partnership where the volunteers feel safe enough to share information about their progress with you and vice versa.

Person-centred supervision

Person-centred supervision is about creating a respectful and supportive partnership that enables people to understand and support each other. Supervision can take a range of different forms:

- » peer-based supervision: where volunteers get together and discuss issues as a team and report back to you
- » one on one or group coffee catchups
- » surveys or other feedback options
- » open door policies
- » Facebook ‘groups’ or Skype catchups
- » recruiting a volunteer ‘supervisor’
- » general emails / phone calls.

Reviewing performance

Whatever the volunteer’s role at the kiosk – host, administrator or tutor – it’s important to regularly review their performance. This helps you to establish that the job is continuing to engage and satisfy your volunteers as well as still helping you to achieve your goals.

Monitor how volunteers are performing in their role and provide them with regular constructive feedback.

This means determining whether volunteers are:

- » working within program and practice guidelines
- » working well within the team
- » working well within the culture of the organisation.

Reviewing performance is also about volunteers having their say. Do they feel adequately supported and supervised? Do they have any feedback on organisational issues? Are they happy? Taking feedback seriously is one way you can recognise a volunteer’s efforts.

A useful tool that those managing volunteers may feel comfortable using is ‘What works/ what doesn’t work?’

What works? What doesn't work?

This tool takes into consideration the volunteers' point of view as well as yours. It can be used to have a discussion with the volunteer about their performance, about their job or even just about the day they have had.

Make sure you follow this up with actions to resolve things that you've identified need improving. Report back on any changes you make as a result. Incorporating volunteers' feedback into decision making demonstrates their views are respected and their ideas are valued.

	What works?	What doesn't work?
Volunteer's perspective		
Manager's perspective		
Other's perspective		



Step 3: Appreciation and acknowledgement

Volunteers only continue to be active when they feel their individual contribution is valued. Ongoing, genuine appreciation is key to keeping your volunteers. Some will need or want more than others and each volunteer will have a preference for how they like to be appreciated.

Nothing beats a genuine thank-you at the time it's deserved; however, there are some formal approaches you can take:

- » Share positive comments from others with your volunteers.
- » Give positive feedback based on your own observations.
- » Celebrate successes in your volunteer programs.
- » Write thank you notes to your volunteers.
- » Provide references if requested or act as a referee.
- » Consider certificates for length of service, special achievements, completion of training, etc.
- » Do something special for National Volunteer Week or International Day of the volunteer.

Step 4: Training and development

It is essential to have training options available for volunteers so they have the skills needed to do their job. Enabling people to 'grow' on the job helps them feel satisfied and valued. Your kiosk will benefit if you can provide opportunities for volunteers to take on extra responsibilities or to move between different roles.

Training options can be flexible and don't need to be expensive.

Common training needs are:

- » induction / orientation
- » occupational health and safety
- » office administration skills – using computers
- » people skills – effective communication, working with special needs, working with people from diverse backgrounds.

The induction process can have a big impact on how much a volunteer feels connected to and part of your organisation. Taking time to plan a welcoming induction is likely to get the relationship off to a good start.

Induction can be offered via:

- » group training sessions
- » online
- » 1:1 face to face / phone / email
- » a written manual.

Essential information that you should pass on to volunteers includes:

- » your kiosk's mission, goals and activities
- » your kiosk's commitment to the definition and principles of volunteering, volunteer rights
- » the role, functions and responsibilities of volunteers
- » relevant operating policies, procedures and work forms
- » lines of authority, accountability and communication
- » relevant risk management and health and safety issues
- » legal requirements
- » confidentiality and customer rights
- » volunteer training calendar or timetable
- » volunteer amenities, work conditions and entitlements.

Example job description

Organisation name	
Volunteer job title	
Organisational mission	
Overview of major responsibility/of this position	
Who volunteer position reports to	
Who volunteer position liaises with	
Work location	
Tasks/activities	
Experience/qualifications required by volunteer including essential and desired	
Benefits of this volunteer role – to the organisation, the volunteer and benefits to community	

KURINGAI NEIGHBOURHOOD CENTRE

Kuringai Neighbourhood Centre is a hive of activity with lots of people coming and going. It's located at the entrance to a major shopping centre in St Ives, in Northern Sydney. The Centre offers a number of services to support and connect with their community, including a yarning group, Mah-Jong and social outings group.

The Centre manager Tricia Meers is advertising for, encouraging and seeking volunteers all the time. When someone offers their volunteer services, Tricia informally interviews them to identify their interests, strengths and abilities, and to find out how much time they have available. Then she matches the volunteer to the community project that best suits them but only if she feels they are suitable for the job.

A mentor system in action

A volunteer mentor system is put into action so the volunteer feels comfortable and confident in the role they are performing.

The BFS Kiosk coordinator, Ann Iles, works with a team of active BFS tutors. They get together to agree to particular lesson time/s that suit when the volunteer tutors are available and the BFS Kiosk timetable.

If a senior phones in or drops into the Centre asking to learn something about computers, their contact details are noted and they are assured that someone will be in touch. Ann then contacts the client to discuss their exact needs and what they want to learn. Then she contacts the volunteer tutor who is rostered on in the agreed time slot, fills them in on the basics about the client's needs and confirms their roster time.

A flexible system

In this flexible system, a volunteer doesn't just come in at the same time each week in the hope of having a client and helping someone. They only come in if there is an appointment. This is of benefit to volunteers who don't want to waste their valuable time. It also means that the computers are free for those confident to use the computer by themselves.

Good communication is essential

The coordinator and tutors are all well informed with a good communication system from the Centre, which keeps them up to date with the BFS Kiosk and the Centre's other activities.

The Kuringai Neighbourhood Centre also advertises clearly the times of the BFS Kiosk and what is available.

The Kiosk's resources are clearly displayed to the community for active engagement.

Need more information?

Broadband for Seniors wiki – bfsv.wikispaces.com/Volunteering

GoVolunteering – govolunteer.com.au

The Centre for Volunteering (NSW) – www.thecentreforvolunteering.com.au

Volunteering Australia – www.volunteeringaustralia.org

Volunteering ACT – www.volunteeringact.org.au

Volunteering Queensland – volunteeringqld.org.au

Volunteering SA/NT – www.volunteeringsa.org.au

Volunteering TAS – www.volunteeringtas.org.au

Volunteering Victoria – www.volunteeringvictoria.org.au

Volunteering WA – volunteeringwa.org.au

Summary

In this chapter we have explored ways to:

- » identify the most suitable volunteers for your kiosk
- » understand how and where to find volunteers
- » support different volunteers
- » recognise and appreciate volunteers
- » find more information.

Volunteers are a vital part of every Broadband for Seniors kiosk. Before recruiting, think carefully about what you want your volunteers to do. Explain their role accurately and give them good reasons to continue to donate their time. If you follow these simple tips, you should find it easier to attract good people to help you. This will also send positive messages to the community about your Broadband for Seniors kiosk.

Volunteering is a different experience for different people. Have fun and enjoy the diversity that volunteering brings to your team.



It's all about increasing awareness so that the seniors in your community are aware of the services you provide.



2 SPREADING THE WORD TO THE LOCAL COMMUNITY

Overview

Spreading the word is vital for the success of all community initiatives – including Broadband for Seniors. It's all about increasing awareness so that the seniors in your community are aware of the services you provide.

To effectively market your Broadband for Seniors kiosk, you need to connect with the seniors in your community. Think of this connection as the 'what's in it for me' connection ... but more about that later.

Marketing is not just about creating flyers and handouts. It's about understanding and conveying the full experience that seniors will have in your kiosk. Remember, they will understand the services you offer by the way you communicate with them.

What you will learn

This chapter explores ways to:

- » reach and attract new seniors
- » raise your kiosk's profile and promote your services
- » build lasting relationships with seniors
- » get support from community partners
- » gain referrals through word-of-mouth.

Once you understand these core principles, you will know how to effectively market your Broadband for Seniors kiosk in your community.



What's in it for me?

Put yourself in an older person's shoes

What's in it for me? This may sound like a selfish thing to ask, but when you are talking about marketing it's important to understand why an older person would want to come to your Broadband for Seniors kiosk in the first place.

- » What's in it for them?
- » What does your kiosk have to offer that they cannot get elsewhere?

Consider what you are trying to achieve

Before you start a marketing campaign, you need to think about the broad goals of the Broadband for Seniors initiative, which is to **increase the capacity and ability of senior Australians to connect with their families, friends and communities by participating online**. Then you need to think about the particular features of your kiosk.

- » What is good about the services you offer?
- » Why would local seniors want to access these services?

Here are some examples:

- » My kiosk is situated in a community-based organisation.
- » My kiosk offers technology training to seniors at no cost.
- » My kiosk has experienced volunteers and mentors to support seniors.
- » My kiosk is a friendly and secure environment.

After you have been through this process, you will see that the 'what's in it for me' is that senior Australians can come along in person to your Broadband for Seniors kiosk in their own community. Once there, they will have access to a computer and to the Internet for free. They will also get the help they need to develop basic technology skills, in a friendly and safe environment.

Sounds pretty good.

Identify the seniors in your neighbourhood

To better understand the value of your kiosk to seniors in your local community, you need to know who they are and where they live, meet, socialise and play. Each community will be different but here are some target groups you can start with where you may find seniors eager to learn.

- | | |
|-------------------------|-----------------------------|
| » Libraries | » Bowls clubs |
| » Senior citizens clubs | » Reading groups |
| » Aged care facilities | » Sports clubs |
| » RSL | » Gardening clubs |
| » Disability services | » Church groups |
| » Seniors villages | » Ulysses motorcycle clubs |
| » Learning centres | » Migrant communities |
| » Dance groups | » Craft groups |
| » Walking groups | » Car clubs |
| » U3A | » Rotary/Probus/Lions clubs |
| » Volunteer networks | |

Brainstorm with your workmates about other possibilities.

Find more information about seniors in your community

Your local government or council

If you are unsure where to find information about the seniors in your community, contact your local government or shire council office. Often this information is available on their website – along with heaps of other information about the local population. For example, you could find out:

- » how many senior Australians live in your area
- » contact details for local community groups and clubs.

A list of local governments can be found by following the state links on the Australian Government website: www.australia.gov.au/topics/government-and-parliament/local-government.

Residential aged care in your community

Some Broadband for Seniors kiosks are located in aged care facilities – where access is restricted to residents. However, there are many seniors in aged care who do not have access to the type of services you offer in your kiosk. To find out where aged care residential homes are in your community, go to the My Aged Care website and search by suburb or town: www.myagedcare.gov.au/service-finders#block-finder-aged-care-home-finder-agedcarehome

Local community learning centres

Some Broadband for Seniors kiosks are located in neighbourhood houses or community centres but this may not be the case in your community. It is always worth visiting your local neighbourhood house or community centre to make sure they are aware of the services you offer to local seniors. The staff there will have a lot of expertise in delivering community programs. Talk to them about your kiosk. Perhaps you could discuss ways of working together. They may be able to help you find other places where seniors in your community meet.

Surf the Net

Visit the following websites to find information about seniors, seniors groups or community organisations near you:

National

Adult Learning Australia:
<https://ala.asn.au/find-a-course>

Australian Seniors Computer Clubs Association
www.ascca.org.au

Community Education Network:
www.communityeducation.net.au

COTA for Older Australians:
<https://www.cotamembership.org.au>

My Aged Care.gov.au:
www.myagedcare.gov.au

National Seniors:
<http://nationalseniors.com.au>

Productive Ageing Centre:
<http://www.productiveageing.com.au>

Probus Association of Victoria:
<http://www.probusvic.com.au>

U3A Online:
<http://www.u3aonline.org.au>

New South Wales

Community Colleges Member Network:
www.cca.edu.au

Local Learning Community Services Association:
<https://www.lcsansw.org.au>

Older Women's Network:
www.ownnsw.org.au

Queensland

Adult Community Education Providers:
<http://training.qld.gov.au/information/ace/provider-list/index.html>

Older People Speak Out:
www.opsso.com.au

South Australia

Community Centres SA:
www.communitycentressa.asn.au/

Victoria

Association of Neighbourhood Houses and Learning Centres:
www.anhlc.asn.au/searchdirectory

Learn Local:
<http://learnlocal.org.au/find-a-learn-local>

Western Australia

Linkwest Community Learning and Development:
www.linkwest.asn.au

Getting your message out there

Now that you know where the seniors live, meet, socialise and play within your community, you need to work out the best way to communicate through these groups – directly to the seniors.

These groups will all communicate with their members in different ways. Some groups will have newsletters that they hand out, mail, email or pop on a community noticeboard. Some groups will have websites, noticeboards, online forums and Facebook pages.

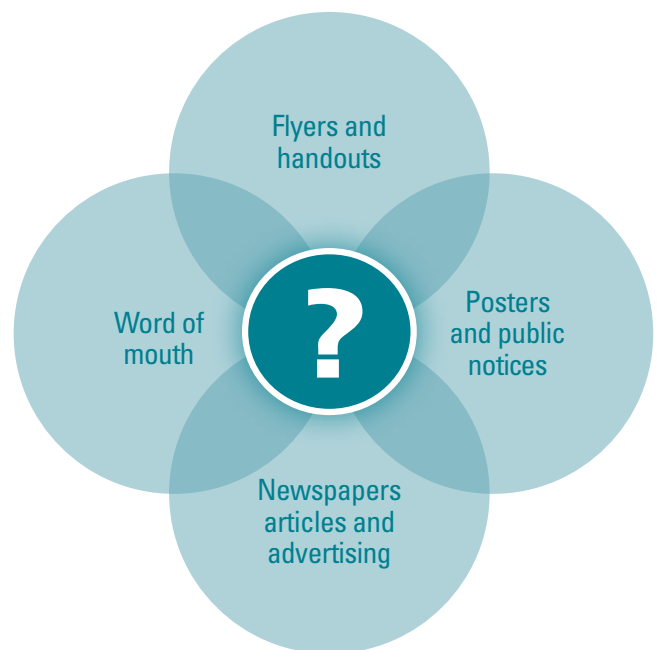
The best place to start is to talk to your target groups. Ask if you can:

- » include a small advertisement for the kiosk in their next newsletter
- » place a flyer or poster on their noticeboard
- » post a comment on their Facebook page.

Raising your kiosk's profile

Let's look at how you can raise your kiosk's profile in your community, here are some starting thoughts:

- » Ask your local council if you can place a notice on their website. Most council websites have a community noticeboard.
- » Place a poster or flyer in the library, at the shopping centre and church hall noticeboards.
- » Contact your local newspaper's advertising department. Ask if you can place a free community notice.
- » Place 'Adult Learners' Week' in your calendar and run an event in the community to raise the profile of the kiosk. You can have an open day at the kiosk. Visit www.adultlearnersweek.org for information on Adult Learners' Week and how you can get involved.
- » Contact your local newspaper editorial team and talk to them about your kiosk. See if they want to do a story about the kiosk and the work being done to raise the digital awareness and computer knowledge of seniors in the community. Think of a good angle before you make contact.
- » Talk with the seniors that have already come into your kiosk. Get their ideas and feedback. Ask them to spread the word about your kiosk – word-of-mouth is a powerful marketing tool!



Remember, your marketing materials should always convey a consistent and clear message to the seniors in your community.

Here are some examples.

GET CONNECTED

Free computer and internet training at your local 'Broadband for Seniors' kiosk

Broadband for Seniors is delivered by community-based organisations that provide all senior Australians, aged 50 years and over, with an accessible, friendly and secure environment to receive free computer and internet training. The computers and internet connection at the kiosk can also be used by seniors for practice and personal computer use outside of scheduled training times.

You will be taught in very small groups (usually only one on one) by senior volunteers who know how difficult it can be to learn new computer skills.

Want to know more?

Contact Broadband for Seniors [insert name] kiosk on [insert phone number] or visit at [insert address]



GET CONNECTED

Free computer and internet training at your local 'Broadband for Seniors' kiosk



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You will be taught in very small groups (usually only one on one) by senior volunteers who know how difficult it can be to learn new computer skills.

- ➡ **Who can attend?** Anyone aged 50 years and over
- ➡ **Where is the kiosk?** [insert address]
- ➡ **How do I get there?** [insert times]
- ➡ **When is the kiosk open** [insert times]
- ➡ **How much does it cost?** **NOTHING** training and use of the kiosk if FREE

What do I need to bring?

Yourself and your eagerness to learn! Bring whatever you need to look after your personal needs away from home - if you have a carer that supports you then they are welcome to come with you. You may find bringing a writing pad and pen for taking notes helpful.

AND the computers and internet connection at the kiosk can be used by seniors for practice and personal computer use outside of scheduled training times.

Want to know more?

Contact Broadband for Seniors [insert name] kiosk on [insert phone number] or visit at [insert address]

There is one more way that you can market your kiosk; that is, through 'word-of-mouth' so let's have a look at that now.

Word of mouth is the best advertising

Word-of-mouth is the most effective and powerful advertising tool you can use.

Think about it for a minute! When you last bought something, went to a restaurant, went on a holiday or even read a book – did you ask your friends or family for their opinion? Did you get a friend to give you their perspective? For example, have you ever asked:

- » Was it value for money?
- » Would you go there again?
- » Was it worth reading?

We do this because we **trust the opinion of people that we know**.

Word-of-mouth advertising is when you have happy seniors who have completed training in your kiosk, who tell other people about how good the kiosk is and how much they learnt in the Broadband for Seniors program.

They are doing your work for you, recommending your kiosk to their friends, families and peers.

Word-of-mouth is usually triggered when a customer (your senior learner) experiences something that is beyond what they expected. The question is how do you make this happen?

Here are four easy steps for triggering word-of-mouth referrals:

Step 1. Make customer service your main objective

When seniors have fun learning, feel welcome and learn what they expected to learn from helpful tutors – they are often **VERY happy**.

If you achieve this, the rest isn't that difficult. People like to talk, they like to tell other people when they are happy with something, and more importantly they usually want to share good news with people they care about. Market research shows that 90% of advertising by word-of-mouth happens in general conversation.

So start by making your seniors' learning an enjoyable experience in your kiosk.

Step 2. Ask for feedback

Ask your past learners for feedback. Get them to complete a survey, but also ask them to let you and their tutor know what they enjoyed and how they are going to use the new knowledge they have acquired. Having these conversations with seniors as they finish their training opens the door for you to find out if there is any further training they may need.

A happy learner makes a great return learner.

Ask your seniors if they mind giving you their email address so that you can contact them with future kiosk news. You can then share training dates with them, which they can share with their family, friends and peers.

It is a good idea to record their name, email, contact number and the date consent was given in an exercise book or electronically in a spreadsheet, so that you have a record of the consent and can easily cross someone off the list should they remove their consent in the future. It is important that should someone ask to be removed from the list that you do this straight away.

It is important to remember that in Australia we have laws that protect our privacy. The *Privacy Act 1988* (Cth) regulates the handling of personal information, and includes 13 Australian Privacy Principles. See www.oaic.gov.au/privacy/privacy-act/the-privacy-act for more information.

GINGIN DISTRICT COMMUNITY RESOURCE CENTRE

Gingin District Community Resource Centre is a non-profit, community-based organisation. It is run by a volunteer management committee, volunteers and paid staff. Gingin CRC provides resources, information, education and social inclusion to Gingin's rural communities. Gingin CRC moved from cramped and unsuitable accommodation to a purpose-built community resource centre, which includes the library. Being located in a public space along with other important community services has really made a difference for them in terms of visibility.

One of the services Gingin CRC offers is a Broadband for Seniors kiosk. Local communities are diverse and widespread so they really needed a series of strategies that help them access different communities and keep them informed.

Using Facebook

'We have a Facebook page which we keep current. This is perhaps the most effective mechanism,' says Alison McVee – the assistant manager at Gingin CRC.

Gingin CRC promotes services, events and occasions on its Facebook page. The benefits of this are that 'friends of your Facebook page are likely to re-promote the service via "sharing", word-of-mouth, recommending the service to family members, friends or by even just talking about it,' says Alison.

However, the problem with social media is that it's 'not commonly used amongst seniors; therefore you may not be promoting the service directly to a large target audience,' explains Alison.

Word-of-mouth

Word-of-mouth is a great way to reach seniors – and there are no upfront promotional costs. You can use events and training to promote your service and even take bookings on-the-spot. If existing BFS clients are happy with the service offered, they are more likely to recommend it to their peers. But word-of-mouth 'may not have an immediate effect if you are only beginning to build up your client base' so you need a range of marketing strategies.

Flyers and other advertising

Gingin CRC design flyers that highlight key aspects of the service, including training and events. The flyers are distributed to businesses in the community 'where they are displayed on noticeboards and windows'. Sometimes, these flyers are included in local community newspapers and newsletters such as Gingin District High School newsletter and pensioner group newsletters. Remember though, it's easy for flyers to be overlooked if they're not eye-catching or if they don't contain the right information, so pay attention to your design.

Gingin CRC advertise in various newspapers on a regular or occasional basis depending on the cost and whether or not they believe it reaches their target audience. You really need to think about this before investing in paid advertising because it can be expensive particularly with some community newspapers.

Your website is a wonderful portal for promoting all your services and events. The Gingin CRC website offers more information than would normally appear on a flyer, social media etc. as well as links that redirect the user to other websites including the Broadband for Seniors website. Gingin CRC's website is easy to navigate and regularly updated to attract and keep visitors.

Building relationships that last

According to Alison, the best thing you can do to ensure your service is successful is to build lasting relationships with not only the seniors accessing the service but the volunteers who are providing the service. This can be achieved by giving them the training and support they need. Seniors also need to 'feel comfortable and at ease as many have taken a big step in coming to use the kiosk'.

'To help build our clientele and promote the service we ensure that when we are hosting events or even just talking with people, that we let them know of this FREE fantastic service where they can learn what they want to learn and at their own pace,' explains Alison.

'Our oldest client is 94 years old and comes for an hour each week. He is learning to navigate the Internet searching for information to do with his hobbies. He has developed a fantastic relationship with our volunteer who assists him, and it is this relationship that has built the foundation for a long-lasting training relationship.'

Step 3. Ask for a referral

Don't be afraid to ask your seniors to tell others about your kiosk. Ask your happy senior:

- » to tell their friends, family and peers about Broadband for Seniors and your kiosk
- » if they will take flyers or even a poster to their local group or club to share information about Broadband for Seniors and your kiosk
- » to share information about Broadband for Seniors and your kiosk online through Facebook or by email to friends

Step 4. Acknowledge any referrals received

Ask new seniors how they heard about Broadband for Seniors and your kiosk. If it was through a referral then take the time to email or call the referrer and say thank you.

You ask this question for two reasons – it makes it easy for you to thank a past learner for the referral, it also helps you identify how the new senior heard about the kiosk so that you know which one of your marketing approaches is working for you.

Summary

In this chapter we explored ways to:

- » reach and attract new seniors
- » raise your kiosk's profile and promote your services
- » build lasting relationships with seniors
- » get support from community partners
- » gain referrals through word-of-mouth.

Remember that every community is different so what works in one community may not necessarily work in another. Finding out how people hear about the kiosk is important as it highlights for you what marketing strategies are working, and therefore where you should be spending your time in promoting your kiosk.

Find what works best for you and your community and don't be afraid to ask for help. Ask the target groups that support active seniors in your community to work with you and spread the news about your kiosk and the wonderful work that happens in it.

Speak to your local paper and get them to help you spread the news through editorials or free community advertising. Most importantly speak to your past learners and let those happy seniors spread the word for you.

We live in a connected community and when seniors understand and learn how to connect using all the technologies available to them, they are taking a big step towards overcoming the loneliness of social isolation that many seniors face.



Respectful consultation is
important for developing
an appropriate and
responsive service.



3 WORKING WITH INDIGENOUS AUSTRALIANS

Overview

There are two Indigenous populations within Australia – Aboriginal people and Torres Strait Islander people. They are the First Australians and have lived here for more than 50,000 years.

There are many stereotypes about Indigenous Australians. One assumption is that they are one homogenous group, when in fact Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures and communities are complex and diverse, each with their own unique histories, beliefs and values.

First, we will explore some history; then we will look at ways to build relationships through respectful communication and consultation. Remember that the information provided here is general and does not reflect the opinions of all Indigenous Australians. It's designed to help you work in a culturally sensitive way.

Building real relationships with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities through respectful consultation is important for developing an appropriate and responsive service.

What you will learn

This chapter explores ways to:

- » better understand the history of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples
- » develop partnerships with Indigenous communities
- » communicate with different community groups
- » develop strong relationships
- » seek appropriate support.

Remembering the past

European colonisation had a devastating effect on Indigenous Australians. The settlers had extremely different social, cultural and religious beliefs, and were generally intolerant of others. Indigenous Australians were seen as different, ‘savage’, or worse.

By the early 1900s all states and territories had passed some form of protection legislation that included powers to remove Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children from their families; remove people from their traditional lands and force them to live on missions and reserves; control their movement and wages; determine who people could marry; and determine where people worked and under what conditions.

Many of the negative effects of colonisation are still felt today. By most social and economic indicators, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians continue to be one of the most disadvantaged groups in this country. They have poorer health and higher rates of disability than non-Indigenous people, and shorter average life spans.

Building partnerships

This uneasy past and other experiences, including dislocation and dispossession from their traditional land and culture, have affected how many Indigenous Australians feel about the government and the wider community.

Learn about your local communities

The best relationships are created with trust and respect. To build trust and respect, you need to learn what you can about the local communities. This will help you appreciate the diversity of their history, culture and social dynamics.

Different communities will have different cultural protocols that need to be followed. This may include what areas of the community you are permitted to visit and who you are and aren’t allowed to speak to.

Within Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, the term Elder is used to describe an older person who is knowledgeable and experienced in their culture and community. Elders are respected and trusted, have the authority to talk about or withhold cultural knowledge, and play a pivotal traditional role as decision makers in the community. Consequently they can have a lot of demands placed on their time.

Making contact and building a relationship with Elders can take time. Look out for opportunities to attend community events or meetings. If you have the opportunity to present or talk about your organisation, always explain who you are, what you do and how they can participate. Remember to be clear about the services you are offering. Sharing some level of personal background information about yourself, such as where you come from and where your family is from will be expected in initial introductions and help to build trust.

If possible, arrange for local Elders to visit the kiosk for a morning tea. Ask them if they would be willing to share some historical information about the local area.

Once you have built a connection, it’s a good idea to encourage local Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander people to volunteer at your kiosk (for more details refer to Chapter 1).

Helpful strategies for building partnerships

- » Get to know the area you are working in.
- » Learn the local history by researching Indigenous organisations, Land Councils or other local service providers.
- » Identify the local language groups.
- » Share some information about yourself and the purpose of your visit.
- » Be patient when asking questions.
- » Don’t assume that every Indigenous person knows about or wants to discuss their culture.
- » Accept that it may take some time for community people to get involved.

Communicating in the right way

Appropriate ways of communicating with Indigenous Australian will vary from community to community. Here are some basic tools to help you communicate in an open and informed way.

Welcome to Country

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are the original owners of the land and their relationship with the land is ongoing. It is a mark of respect for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people to welcome visitors to their land, which is why a Welcome to Country is often performed by traditional owners at the beginning of significant community events or conferences. A Welcome to Country can be anything from a short acknowledgment through to a dance or smoking ceremony.

If you are organising a special event, particularly one that involves visitors from other areas, it's respectful to invite an Elder to conduct a formal Welcome to Country. Contact can be made through local Land Councils or Indigenous organisations. These organisations will usually organise and charge you a fee for the Elder's time and travel. For smaller, local events, you are encouraged to give an Acknowledgment of Country at the beginning of the proceedings; name and acknowledge the local Indigenous owners of the land and pay your respects to their Elders past and present.

Languages

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people are not one homogenous culture but a diverse mix of cultures, tribes, clan groups and nations. At the time of European settlement there were around 250 distinct languages and more than 600 dialects spoken across the continent. Today 145 languages are still spoken but only 18 are spoken fluently by all age groups. Many older people in remote communities still speak traditional languages, and English may be a third or fourth language for them.

Aboriginal English is also used in some communities. It has common elements from both Australian English and traditional languages. There are also geographic variations.

Body language

In some communities, direct eye contact may be acceptable but in others it may be considered offensive. This can vary from individual to individual because different families may have different values and beliefs, even if they are from the same community. As with all communication, take your cue from the person you're talking to.

Respect silence

If an Indigenous person does not immediately respond to you, avoid jumping to conclusions. They simply may not wish to express an opinion at that point in time, or they may be thinking about what you said. They may need to seek further advice.

Literacy and numeracy

For some Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, English is their second or third language. Some may have experienced interrupted schooling and they may have difficulties with literacy and numeracy as a result. They may need some support with reading or completing a form, etc. Be sensitive. Don't ask someone if they can read or write. If the situation presents itself, ask if they would like some help or if they would like a family or community member to assist them.

Helpful strategies for communicating

- » Acknowledge Traditional Owners at the beginning of important events.
- » Avoid jargon – use plain English instead.
- » Avoid referring to an Elder as 'Aunty' or 'Uncle' as it may be considered inappropriate unless there is a strong relationship.
- » Do not imitate Aboriginal speech patterns or speak Aboriginal English.
- » Understand that some words have different meanings in different communities.

BETHANIE MAALI CENTRE

Bethanie Maali Centre is proactive when it comes to ensuring that Indigenous Australians are welcome at their Broadband for Seniors kiosk. Staff make sure the kiosk is both inviting and inclusive to all the different groups in their community.

One group – who refers to themselves as the Maali Mob – attends the kiosk two days each week. The kiosk runs organised activities and most of the seniors are regular and long-term attenders.

‘We foster open and transparent communication in the form of meetings and the dissemination of information to relevant Elder groups,’ explains Kerry Grieve – the Centre coordinator.

The services that Bethanie offer embrace cultural and ethnic diversity and the equal opportunity protocol that deems all people equal irrespective of their race, creed or socio-economic circumstances.

‘People are also treated as individuals here,’ explains Kerry. ‘They are encouraged and supported to retain their independence in the use of the kiosk.’

Seniors are invited to share their cultural heritage. Some people are happy to do this – others are not. Regardless, their choices are always respected. Strong relationships have developed between the seniors and kiosk staff because staff have taken the time to learn what they can about the different communities.

At Bethanie, staff run sessions to show the Maali Mob what they can do online.

‘They love music; in particular Ali Arjibuk Mills’ version of Waltzing Matilda. They had heard this before but didn’t know where to find it again. After some searching, we found the video on YouTube – the whole group really enjoyed it.

‘We also looked at how to open emails and search for other things on YouTube such as Slim Dusty. The group then began to share stories about seeing Slim Dusty years ago; travelling miles and getting dressed up for the occasion.

‘They had many photos online which we looked at together. They talked about the people in the photos and what they were doing – crafts, celebrations or gardening.’

Not all the seniors are comfortable with technology so tutors don’t bombard them with questions. They are patient and understand that building trust may take some time.

‘Not all the seniors are ready to use the computers just yet but the kiosk offers them a central point for information and entertainment,’ says Kerry.

- » Value and acknowledge everyone's opinion.
- » Respect their silence and accept that sometimes you won't get an answer.
- » Don't interrupt unnecessarily or force your own point of view.

Sorry business

In some communities, it is disrespectful to say the name of a deceased person. Sometimes different names are used to refer to a deceased person, and this may continue for a long period of time. It is generally considered inappropriate to display a picture of a deceased person, particularly if the image is displayed where the family may see it. 'Sorry Business' is a term used by Indigenous Australians to indicate that there has been a death in the community. It is not appropriate to ask for or arrange a meeting during this time.

Helpful strategies for respecting sorry business

- » Avoid displaying or broadcasting images of deceased people.
- » Understand that family obligations take first priority.
- » Be aware that a death may affect the whole community.

Use the right terms

- » Use capitals letters for 'Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander' and Indigenous.
- » Use the term 'Aboriginal' if you are referring only to Aboriginal people, and 'Torres Strait Islanders' if you are referring only to Torres Strait Islanders.
- » Check if it is OK to use the term 'Indigenous Australians' if you are referring to both groups.
- » Don't use acronyms such as TSI, TI and ATSI.
- » Never use terms such as full blood, half caste, quarter caste or part Aboriginal.
- » The term 'Our Indigenous people' is generally considered patronising and should be avoided.

Getting help

There are people and organisations there to help if you are unsure. For example:

- » Indigenous.gov.au – www.indigenous.gov.au
- » Reconciliation Australia – www.reconciliation.org.au
- » Australian Institute for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies – www.aiatsis.gov.au
- » Your local Land Council – australia.gov.au/people/indigenous-peoples/land-councils
- » National NAIDOC Committee – www.naidoc.org.au

Summary

In this chapter we explored ways to:

- » better understand the history of Indigenous Australians
- » develop partnerships with Indigenous communities
- » communicate with different community groups
- » develop strong relationships
- » seek appropriate support.

The most important thing to remember when communicating with anyone is to take your cue from the person you're talking to. Ask questions but don't overwhelm them. Be sensitive. Consider the impact of history and racism. Most importantly, accept that developing strong relationships takes time and patience.



You need to work out how to engage with seniors in your community who are from culturally diverse backgrounds.



4 WORKING WITH PEOPLE FROM NON-ENGLISH-SPEAKING BACKGROUNDS

Overview

Australian seniors are a diverse group. Did you know that around one million Australian seniors were born overseas, with many arriving from non-English-speaking countries? Seniors from culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) backgrounds are a significant, and growing, section of our population.

To offer an inclusive and responsive service, you need to work out how to engage with seniors in your community who are from culturally diverse backgrounds. To do this, you need to consider their language, cultural and communication needs.

First, we will explore ways to understand the ever-changing shape of your community, then we will provide some strategies to help you locate and engage with the different cultural groups in your community. Finally, we will discuss some simple ways that will help you work with culturally diverse groups in your Broadband for Seniors kiosks around Australia.

We are all shaped by our cultural beliefs and attitudes, and our roles and responsibilities in society. These things also influence how we like to receive services in our communities.

What you will learn

This chapter explores ways to:

- » identify the changing shape of your community
- » reach seniors from diverse backgrounds
- » find ways to deal with common issues
- » tailor your tutoring approach.

The changing shape of our communities

Australia has a fast growing and diverse population. The numbers of seniors from non-English-speaking backgrounds has grown significantly, largely due to post-war migrants arriving in Australia as adults. Many of these seniors were born in Italy, Greece, Germany, the Netherlands and China. But this composition will always change as successive waves of migration occur.

Understanding difference

It is important to distinguish between CALD groups that have recently arrived and those who are long-settled into Australian communities. There are big differences between the needs of new and established CALD groups. The needs of different CALD seniors will vary according to where they came from, why they left, their socio-economic status and fluency in English. Some CALD seniors may have experienced violence, threats, natural disasters, war or political instability.

It is worthwhile taking a moment to reflect on how disruptive migration can be for some people. For many it may not have been a choice. The decision to leave may have been made out of necessity. Some CALD seniors may feel totally disorientated by the experience. Even those that have lived in Australia for many years may still experience traumatic memories; which can re-emerge as they age.

Research CALD seniors in your community

There are various ways that you can discover more about the seniors from non-English speaking backgrounds living in your community. To get started, check out your local government or council website. Most will have a community profile page, which details migration patterns, local population data by location and sometimes even by age.

See if there is a migrant information centre nearby or contact local religious groups. They can provide information about who is moving into your neighbourhood and perhaps even link you in with relevant groups.

The Australian Bureau of Statistics website is a fantastic resource that is easy to access and use. The statistics and general information provided really help to build a broad picture of the cultural diversity that exists in our country. Check out the census data and analysis: www.abs.gov.au.

Another good resource is the Centre for Cultural Diversity in Ageing website: www.culturaldiversity.com.au, which includes census data and demographics, research and reports.

When you are armed with this useful information, you're then ready to work out how to reach the CALD seniors in your community.

Reaching CALD seniors

A whole-of-organisation approach

As an organisation, it's important that your kiosk shows that it is committed to providing a service to all members of your community. This means making sure all staff at your kiosk understand and value diversity. It's also a good idea to ensure the volunteers you recruit in your kiosk reflect the diversity of your community (refer to Chapter 1 for more information on recruiting volunteers).

Start by developing a plan for engaging and working with CALD seniors and devote some time and resources to the task.

Some CALD seniors will not be proficient in English, particularly if they came to Australia later in life. Others will lose their English proficiency through memory loss.

If someone has poor English language skills, they may be harder to reach because they may be unaware of services available to them in their community, including your Broadband for Seniors kiosk.

Helpful strategies

Here are some tips to help you engage seniors from CALD backgrounds:

- » Seek advice from different cultural groups / agencies / bodies within your community.
- » Take the time to learn about the different cultures and customs in your community.
- » Keep an open mind and be willing to adapt the way you communicate.
- » Remember that their experience of life will be different to yours.
- » Be sensitive to the role gender plays in different cultural groups.
- » Understand that people may not trust your motives.
- » Make sure your volunteers reflect the diversity of your community.

Conveying your message

Understanding something about the culture of the person you are communicating with is helpful. Most people appreciate this kind of effort. It doesn't mean you have to know everything but just a few things can help break the ice.

Different cultural groups or individuals may have a preferred way to receive information. Using a flyer may not be the best way to communicate with them; particularly if their culture has a strong oral tradition. Explore different ways to share information.

Devise ways to 'show your message' rather than relying on a lot of text. Sometimes this can be achieved through pictures, graphics or a series of photographs with minimal text. Make sure the images you use:

- » reflect the views of that cultural group
- » are simple and relevant
- » contain easy to recognise symbols.

Where possible, translate key information about your service into different community languages. Google Translate is not perfect but it can certainly help. Ask particular cultural agencies or groups if they can review your translated information before it is distributed.

Be aware of social isolation

Some seniors from different cultural backgrounds may feel isolated because they do not have close family networks, their partner may have died, their literacy levels are low, they live away from their communities and/or they have no transport.

Attitudes to learning

A senior's cultural background may affect how they feel about learning and the learning environment. Things to consider include:

- » the person's previous experience of education or work
- » their competency in English
- » their level of literacy in their first language
- » the amount of time to allow for individual tutoring
- » the level of assistance or support you need to give
- » how formal the tutoring session should be
- » the appropriateness of the learning space.

CALD seniors with poor English language skills may also find it difficult to clearly articulate their needs. They may find this frustrating. If the older person agrees, you could seek assistance from their family and friends.

Helpful strategies for effective communication

Here are some ideas that may help you to communicate more effectively with CALD seniors:

Treat each person as an individual

Positive or negative stereotypes about a group of people can affect how you respond to them. Avoid generalising about their ethnicity or nationality. Always consider people as individuals with their own social history and experiences.

Be aware of body language

- » Body language is a big part of communication. Be aware that your expressions, posture, gestures or movements say a lot – even before you open your mouth to speak. Make sure your body language and tone are both positive and consistent.
- » Make eye contact so you know you have the person's attention before you start talking. (This may not be appropriate for some CALD seniors so you must be sensitive to different cultural responses to emotions, personal space and use of silence).
- » Find a quiet and private area to work in. An older CALD person may be more guarded or stressed in a busy, noisy or unfamiliar area.

Be clear and concise

- » Avoid using slang and jargon.
- » Use short, plain and simple language that the person is likely to understand.
- » Adapt the pace of your conversation to suit the person you're working with. If necessary, slow down and repeat what you've said.
- » Don't overload the person with too much information. Ask the person to tell you in their own words what you've explained.
- » Use imagery where possible to convey difficult concepts.
- » Make sure that the information you are sharing is culturally appropriate and relevant.
- » Give people plenty of time to respond.
- » Don't exclude them from discussions when others are around.

Using translation services

If you have access to someone who can translate into the same language / dialect explain to the interpreter how you want them to be able to assist you. When using an interpreter, direct your remarks and questions to the older person and allow time for questions and clarification.

NORTHCOTT COMMUNITY CENTRE

Northcott Community Centre is located close to large social housing complexes that have a diverse mix of multicultural communities. Northcott CC shares their approach below.

‘We attend meetings and events that are held within these complexes to obtain information from various groups about their needs and what they are interested in.

‘We are also in touch with local cultural groups in our community. We ask them for feedback and information on their needs. We make every effort to give people a voice, even if they do not speak English, through support services, activities or translating services.

‘We share our Centre with other community groups. We also have partnerships with groups that run various programs. This helps to keep us informed about what’s going on in our community.

‘We meet with key stakeholders from different cultural groups to ensure their needs are met. We also work hard to provide translator services, where possible, and to provide materials in languages that are relevant for our community.

‘We have active tenant representatives as well that participate in advisory

meetings and various activities held in our community centre. This gives us another link to various cultural groups in our community.

‘We work collaboratively with multicultural centres to ensure we are addressing people in the most appropriate way, however, we have found that the most effective way to reach seniors in our community is to provide volunteer tutors from different cultural backgrounds.

‘We recruit tutors that can relate to our students due to their language and background. This works because the tutors are sensitive to and have knowledge about appropriate protocols.

‘We encourage our seniors to communicate with us directly about their needs and we adjust how we work with them accordingly. All tutors are taken through some basic training around respect before they start volunteering. We use polite and straightforward language and, where possible, try to translate all required material and communication to ensure understanding.’

Reflecting on your own culture

Learning about your own culture actually helps you understand other cultures. By reflecting on how your own culture has affected your life – you will become better at listening to and understanding the stories of others.

Ask yourself:

- » What is my cultural background?
- » Do I know much about my own ancestors?
- » Are my views influenced by my cultural background and heritage?
- » What are my own cultural biases?

Keep learning about other cultures

There are many simple ways that you can continue to learn about different cultures. Here are some ideas.

- » Ask questions or read about other cultures, customs and views.
- » Build friendships with people from different backgrounds.
- » Listen to their stories.
- » Notice the different way people communicate.
- » Learn from making mistakes.

Summary

In this chapter we explored ways to:

- » identify the changing shape of your community
- » reach seniors from diverse backgrounds
- » find ways to deal with common issues
- » tailor your tutoring approach.

The most effective way to work with people from different cultural backgrounds is to take the time to build strong relationships and be sensitive to the impact of their culture on their daily lives. Understanding a person's attitudes to and experience of learning, and being able to tailor your message are effective ways of working with people for whom English is not their first language.

In many respects, we can be limited by own cultural point of view. You will reap great rewards from learning about different cultures and through building a learning environment based on mutual respect and support.



Working with people
with low literacy can
be rewarding and
stimulating but it
requires patience.



5 WORKING WITH PEOPLE WITH LOW LITERACY

Overview

Using the Internet presents many challenges for older people with low literacy levels. Many have had negative learning experiences that can make them fear new learning, especially if it involves technology.

Often seniors with low literacy feel isolated and inadequate. They have not been able to enjoy the benefits that the Internet can offer. These include staying connected with friends and relatives and finding relevant information and using available services.

Low literacy is different from illiteracy. People with low literacy often know their alphabet. They find it difficult to read and write because they focus on each word. This makes reading and writing a very slow process.

Older people with low literacy may also experience age-related health problems, especially with vision and hearing. These may make them even more hesitant to go online.

In this chapter, we will look at some ways of understanding low literacy. We will also look at ways of helping seniors with low literacy and encouraging them to feel comfortable in a social learning environment.

Working with people with low literacy can be rewarding and stimulating but it requires patience.

It is important to know how to look after yourself and where you can find help if required.

What you will learn

This chapter explores ways to:

- » understand the impact of low literacy
- » understand the fear of failure
- » assist seniors with low literacy
- » emphasise online safety
- » increase social and community connections.

Understanding low literacy

Low literacy affects a person's ability to function socially and in the workplace. People from any background can have low literacy. People have low literacy for different reasons. These may include:

- » missing early basic learning
- » interrupted schooling
- » poor socio-economic background
- » a disability
- » anxiety.

Difficulties seniors with low literacy experience

People with low literacy have trouble scanning information. They read text word by word. This is a very slow process. If they are using a computer screen, information may vanish before they even have a chance to look at it.

Older people with low literacy may have difficulty:

- » reading documents, medical labels, maps and timetables
- » banking
- » reading and writing emails and letters
- » filling in forms
- » reading novels
- » looking at a lot of information on a computer screen.

Fear of failure

Negative learning experiences

Often older people with low literacy have a strong fear of failure. Many had negative experiences at school. They may have been made to feel stupid because they were slow at reading and writing. When they attended school class sizes were large and their literacy needs may have been missed or ignored.

Keeping up appearances

Many older people with low literacy have worked, run households and raised families. They don't want to appear to be different from other people. Often they have managed to hide their low literacy by getting family members to pay bills and fill in forms. This makes them less independent. For example, seniors with low literacy have a lot of trouble reading medical brochures and checking information on the Internet. This means they may miss out on important medical information if they can't find someone to help them.

Feeling overwhelmed

In today's technology driven world, it is expected that people will use the Internet for many tasks. These include downloading forms, paying bills and replying to emails. Seniors with low literacy may feel it is too difficult to use computers. They will feel more comfortable if you explain that they can choose what they want to do on the computer and the Internet.

Assisting seniors with low literacy

Older people with low literacy have taken a big step coming to your kiosk. They want to learn. But many will be worried about making mistakes. They don't want to be embarrassed. Sometimes they may use excuses such as 'I forgot my glasses'. It might take you some time to realise they have low literacy. It is important that you help people feel relaxed and that they are not being tested or judged.

Keep learning relevant

Needs are very strong motivators for learning. Ask people what they would like to be able to use the Internet for. Or suggest some things they could try.

Take time to find out what the person is really interested in so you can make what they are learning relevant. For example, if the older person has travelled you could get them to talk about a place they really enjoyed visiting. Then they could do a simple Internet search on this place.

Here are some ideas that you could use to motivate your seniors to use the Internet. Depending on their interests, they could:

- » find some recipes
- » access local government/council information
- » check out craft projects
- » shop online
- » research their favourite actor
- » improve their learning
- » make social contact through email or social media.

Some suggested activities

- » Get them to tell you something they really want to research.
- » Demonstrate and talk through a simple Internet search.
- » Encourage them to have a go.
- » Let them try before assisting.
- » If needed, offer assistance.
- » Get them to repeat the search for reinforcement.
- » Ask them to try to get one or two email addresses; for example, from family members or friends. Then demonstrate how to set up a free email account.
- » Get them to try to write and send an email.

An example of a simple search is www.bbc.co.uk/skillswise. This site has a number of simple skill building exercises.

Pacing learning

It is important to remember that people with low literacy often need more time to complete tasks. It is best not to crowd your session with too much information. A research task may take up a whole session. An email task could be done in another session.

Other things to remember are:

- » take things step by step, only giving one instruction at a time
- » the importance of breaks
- » possible effects of medication
- » physical conditions (for example, carpal tunnel, poor eyesight, hearing loss, arthritis, memory loss)
- » correct computer posture
- » the need for revising new learning.

Linking information

People with low literacy have trouble linking (connecting) information. There are two ways they can be encouraged to link information.

One way is using what they already know as a building block. For example, if they already know how to bake a good chocolate cake you could encourage them to do an Internet search for different types of cakes.

The other way is to look at information on a website's homepage and follow it up by clicking on a related link on that homepage. For example, the City of Melbourne Council (www.melbourne.vic.gov.au) has a number of trail links. These include information on how to communicate with council, libraries and sports and recreation facilities.

Pause, prompt and praise

The pause, prompt and praise technique is one way of helping older people feel more confident. When they are trying to do a task, don't rush in and do it for them. Pause and see if they come up with a way of doing something. If they can't, make a suggestion. You may need to demonstrate again. Like anyone else, older people with low literacy like to feel they have been successful. Positive reinforcement, without being condescending, is important. Comments such as 'Well done' or 'Great effort' are helpful.



FACT BOX

The Organisation for the Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) measures adult skills and competencies through the Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies survey (PIAAC).

This survey measures literacy, numeracy and problem solving in technology-rich environments on a scale of 1–5, with 1 being the lowest and 5 being the highest. Australia was one of 24 countries that participated.

The Australian Bureau of Statistics released the results in October 2013.

What does PIAAC say about older Australians?

What PIAAC found was that there is a significant decline in literacy and numeracy skills in adults from their late 40s onwards.

It also found that the proportions of people at Level 1 was higher among the oldest age groups (people aged 60 years and older) than in the younger age groups for both literacy and numeracy skills.

It is generally accepted that anything below Level 3 is considered too low for someone to fully integrate and participate in the workplace and in other aspects of life.

Emphasise safety

Older people with low literacy are often vulnerable. They can be easy targets for scammers.

Remember to talk about:

- » the importance of security software
- » the need for a strong password
- » computer viruses
- » not clicking on pop-up windows or banners when browsing a site
- » only opening information from trusted sites
- » not opening emails from people you don't know even when they addressed to 'Dear friend'
- » not trusting any email that asks for money or passwords
- » signing out of an email account.

It is also really important that seniors know banks and the Australian Tax Office do not send emails asking for account and password details.

There are some terrific resources on cyber safety on the Broadband for Seniors wiki: <http://bfsv.wikispaces.com/Cyber+safety>.

Increasing social and community connections

Older people with low literacy can be socially isolated. They may feel ashamed that they have trouble reading and writing and avoid situations that might reveal their low literacy.

Your Broadband for Seniors kiosk offers a chance for them to feel comfortable, socialise with others and increase community connections.

Summary

In this chapter we explored ways to:

- » understand the impact of low literacy
- » identify fear of failure
- » assist seniors with low literacy
- » emphasise online safety
- » increase social and community connections.

Understanding the effects low literacy has on older people helps you identify ways of assisting people to use computers and the Internet.

The best ways of working with older people with low literacy are getting to know them, listening, demonstrating and encouraging them to have a go.

There are some terrific resources available on the Internet. For example, Literacy Face to Face, which can be downloaded from: www.sianadvatafe.nsw.edu.au/resources/downloadable-resources-list/literacy-face-to-face/



Working with people
with disability can be
very rewarding, great
fun and stimulating.



6 WORKING WITH PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

Overview

Getting online presents a lot of challenges for older people with disabilities. They can feel excluded from all the benefits that the Internet can offer.

Disability presents itself in many different forms and degrees of severity; however, this chapter will focus mainly on the most common forms of age-related disability.

First, we will look at ways to attract people with disability to your service and then how best to respond to the effects their disability may have on them when they arrive.

Working with people with disability can be very rewarding, great fun and stimulating. But it can also be hard work, so you need to know where you can find help if you need it.

What you will learn

This chapter explores ways to:

- » attract older people with disability to your kiosk
- » engage with disability in general
- » assist seniors with particular disabilities
- » increase connections
- » find the help you need.

Attracting older people with disability to your kiosk

It is best to advertise your Broadband for Seniors kiosk where older people with disability are likely to be. These can include:

- » disability service organisations
- » libraries
- » aged care facilities
- » seniors' clubs.

In fact, many Broadband for Seniors kiosks are located in these types of facilities.

When advertising the services your kiosk provides, make sure the important points are in large print and in a clear unfussy layout. Include full details about building access; the support available and/or what they might need to provide for themselves.

Refer to Chapter 2 for more general details on marketing your kiosk.

How should you act?

An older person with a disability is a person first. They experience the same range of emotions, interests and sensitivities as everyone else. When communicating, make sure you maintain eye contact in the same way you would with any other person. Speak to them directly not to their companion or support person, and use age appropriate language.

Many people worry about saying the wrong thing. For example, if you are unsure about their mobility, just ask 'Is it OK to talk about how you get around?' Don't just touch or move an older person's wheelchair without their permission.

Avoid doing things for them – let them have a try. If they get it wrong, point this out politely, show how it is done and let them have another go. Ask them if they need help rather than assuming they do, and accept 'No' if they don't.

Remember to seek advice from those who know the person well – their family or carers – they will have a lot of information that can help you support this person in the best possible way.

Factor in breaks

Most seniors with a disability of any kind suffer from fatigue so it's important to factor in regular breaks throughout your training sessions.

Impacts of disability

Vision loss

Although most people who are vision impaired are not totally blind, not being able to see well can hinder communication. It is hard for someone with vision impairment to identify body language. This can mean that they cannot pick up the cues that someone else wishes to speak. They may not be able to identify the speaker just by their voice or be able to ascertain who else is present in the conversation. They are also clearly not able to take advantage of visual aids and displays.

Helpful strategies

- » Identify yourself and ask others in the room to do the same so that the senior can locate them.
- » Don't shout. Seniors who are blind or vision impaired are not deaf.
- » Don't push or steer them, let them take your hand or elbow.
- » When seating an older person who is blind or vision impaired, guide their hand to the back of the chair and allow them to seat themselves.
- » Show them where things are placed and let them pick up and feel objects, where appropriate, but don't force them to touch new things if they are unsure about them.
- » Don't move objects without saying.
- » If you are leaving, tell the person where you are going, who is still with them and when you will be back. It is embarrassing to be talking to someone who isn't there.
- » It's OK to use words like 'look' and 'see'.
- » It's fine to refer to colour when talking to the person.

- » Do not pat or play with an assistance animal unless it is out of harness.
- » Provide written material in large font (Arial 18+), electronically or in Braille depending on their preference.

Hearing loss

Only very few deaf people have no hearing at all. Even those with severe hearing loss can pick up certain ranges of sound via hearing aids or other equipment. However, hearing aids do not restore the full range of hearing, and some deaf people choose not to use them. Although lip reading is a skill that many deaf people use, it is not an accurate means of understanding speech, as about sixty per cent of lip reading is guesswork.

Strategies for working with someone with hearing loss

- » Ask if they lip read or if they would like you to write notes.
- » Make sure you have face-to-face contact with the person you are talking with.
- » Don't cover your mouth with your hands or clothing.
- » Get the listener's attention before you start speaking.
- » Speak clearly but not too slowly, and don't exaggerate your lip movements – this can make it harder to lip read.
- » Don't shout. It can be uncomfortable for hearing aid users, it can distort lip patterns and it looks aggressive.
- » If someone doesn't understand what you've said, don't keep repeating it. Try saying it in a different way; for example, 'rug' instead of 'carpet'.
- » Cut down on background noise.
- » Maximise visual clues; for example, good signage, directions, hand-outs and captions.

Memory loss

Short-term memory loss may be age related or can be part of a long-term disability such as intellectual disability or acquired brain injury. Although a person may be able to remember clearly things that happened years ago, they may not be able to remember what occurred yesterday or what happened in the last hour. Older people with short-term memory loss can learn, but it may take a long time. This can be very frustrating and needs a lot of patience.

Strategies for helping people with memory loss

- » Break a task into small steps.
- » Practice each step until it is mastered before moving on.
- » Only give one instruction at a time.
- » Demonstrate and talk through. Show what has to be done and explain what you are doing at each stage. Ask them to do what you have done. If it's not done correctly, demonstrate again, making note of any particular difficulties. Then let them try again.
- » Reflect and review. For example, start each new session with 'What did we do last time?' and end each day with 'What have we done today?'
- » Check for understanding. Ask if something is understood and then ask for a demonstration or example. Never just accept a nod of the head.
- » Repetition. Show what has to be done and ask for it to be repeated again and again (and again) until it is second nature.

Loss of mobility

People who lack mobility are not necessarily wheelchair users, they may use Zimmer frames, walking sticks or no aids at all. Even so, consider how easy it is for them to access a building or room.

Strategies for improving access

- » Check for standards on door widths (1200 mm), ramp slopes (1:14).
- » Check desk heights to accommodate chair wheels.
- » Check availability of accessible parking and accessible toilets.
- » Allow for frequent breaks.
- » Allow for absences due to fatigue or ill health.
- » Explore alternative technologies such as large keyboards, track balls, head pointers.

Dementia

Dementia is an umbrella term that refers to symptoms caused by changes in the functioning of the brain. These can include alterations in memory, personality and behaviour. They may have difficulty in finding a word, so a related word might be given instead of one they cannot remember.

Older people with dementia may talk fluently, but they may not make sense. They may have difficulty understanding what you are saying or only be able to grasp part of it. Their writing and reading skills may deteriorate. Normal social conventions may be lost. For example, they may interrupt or ignore a speaker; fail to respond when spoken to or constantly repeat the same behaviours or ask the same question. They may also have difficulty in expressing emotions appropriately.

Strategies for working with people with dementia

- » Remain calm and talk in a gentle, matter-of-fact way.
- » Live with their reality – if they think they are living in another place that is where they are living.
- » Body language, facial expression and tone of voice are very important.
- » Keep sentences short and simple, focusing on one idea at a time.
- » Always allow plenty of time for what you have said to be understood.
- » Maintain regular routines – this helps to minimise confusion and can assist communication.
- » Keep a consistent approach. It is much less confusing for the person with dementia if everyone uses the same style of communication.
- » Allow time to speak. Try not to finish their sentences. Just listen, and don't let them feel embarrassed if they lose the thread.
- » Don't rush them into something. They need time to think or respond and to let you know whether they really want to do it.
- » Find ways to talk without questions, which can alarm or make a person feel uncomfortable.

Effect of medication

Many older people take medications. These often have side effects such as a lack of motivation; inappropriate expressions of emotion; disorganised thought processes including difficulty making decisions, organising and planning ahead or difficulty concentrating and remembering. They may also display high levels of anxiety or tremors. Outwardly, they may appear tense and worried and / or restless.

Strategies for working with people affected by medication

- » Understand that disinterest is not a criticism of you – don't take it personally.
- » Encourage the smallest achievements and focus on achievements already made.
- » Allow for frequent breaks for coffee or a walk.
- » Acknowledge frustration and try to understand/empathise with the cause.
- » Be calm, patient and empathise with how the person is feeling.
- » Minimise distractions – organise a quiet space to withdraw away from noise.
- » Understand that some may arrive late and be flexible about people leaving early.
- » Negotiate realistic tasks.

Making connections

Older people with disability need social connections as much as (if not more than) the rest of us. However, some people are not used to being social and may need encouragement.

Don't answer for someone, even if they are slow to respond. If they really do not seem to be able to reply, ask if they mind if you answer. Sometimes people with dementia or with other mind-related disability have lost social skills, be patient and remember their behaviour does not reflect badly on you.

Some people may feel embarrassed or awkward when first meeting with an older people with disability. They may avoid them rather than be put in an awkward position or fail to understand what is said to them. Your actions and words can act as a model for them and put them at ease.

AURORA DISABILITY SERVICES

Aurora Disability Services is located in an older-style house in Glenorchy, just north of Hobart. It is a registered charity that offers vocational training, basic education and life skills for people with disabilities, and respite for families and carers.

Aurora is a person-centred, accessible and strengths-based service. It is focused on promoting inclusiveness, resilience and independence. Developing the skills and abilities of people with disabilities is an important part of its mission.

‘When Broadband for Seniors first started a few years back, we put forward a strong case because we felt it was important that seniors with disabilities did not miss out,’ explains Joy Cairns – the managing director.

People with disabilities face many barriers (physical, mental and systemic). But sometimes the most difficult barriers to overcome are other people’s attitudes about disability.

Reverse integration

Aurora has a big team of volunteers. Volunteer support is essential for the service to operate.

‘We provide training for our volunteers to help them deal with and understand different types of disability. But the best way to learn is on the job,’ says Joy.

When volunteers first come to Aurora, many have low or no technology skills, so Joy felt the best model for the kiosk was one where volunteers and seniors with disabilities learn together – this process is referred to as reverse integration.

‘We run sessions with the volunteers sitting alongside the seniors. They learn together but the volunteers modify what they’ve learnt and support the senior with a disability as they can be a bit slower to learn,’ says Joy.

Aurora has developed a wealth of skills this way for both volunteers and the seniors.

‘Many of our seniors couldn’t make the connection between the mouse and the computer, and learning how to click left and right on the mouse was often confusing. The TouchScreen has really helped there,’ says Joy.

Aurora has since sourced other funding to purchase more computers so they can assist even more people to develop computer, email and Internet skills.

‘We are learning ourselves as we introduce computer skills to people with a wide range of disabilities. We have investigated other ways that people could better gain skills using the computers such as phonics. Every day there is a 40-minute phonics session, where seniors have the opportunity to learn things they may not have had the opportunity to learn at school,’ says Joy.

To make sure the community is aware of the services they offer, Aurora holds regular events such as an ANZAC bake and Ten Pin Bowling.

‘We let the papers know and our newsletter is distributed to other services and individuals to keep people updated about what we’re doing. We’ve even got a blog,’ says Joy.

Getting help

Everyone is different and sometimes people can present with problems you might not know how to deal with. People who can help include:

- » those who know them well – their family or carers
- » any aged care or disability service they may be attached to
- » specialist organisations such as Vicdeaf (www.vicdeaf.com.au), Vision Australia (www.visionaustralia.org), Alzheimer's Australia (www.fightdementia.org.au) and the ACE DisAbility Network (acedisability.org.au) all have excellent websites with lots of information
- » download *Helping seniors with disabilities get online* from the COTA website (www.cotawa.org.au).

Summary

In this chapter we explored ways to:

- » attract older people with disability to your kiosk
- » engage with disability in general
- » assist seniors with particular disabilities
- » increase connections
- » find the help you need.

This has been a brief outline of the impacts of the major disability types of people who are older and how you can respond.

The best way of working with someone with a disability is to get to know them and let them teach you how to work with them.





'Give a person a fish
and you feed them for
a day. Teach them to
fish and you feed them
for a lifetime'



7

TUTORING ADULTS AND FINDING RESOURCES

Overview

In the fast paced world of technology, training resources recommended today may be obsolete tomorrow. Volunteer tutors need to respond to the individual training needs of seniors but finding current, accurate, relevant and accessible resources can be tricky.

There is a Chinese proverb which says ‘Give a person a fish and you feed them for a day. Teach them to fish and you feed them for a lifetime’. The underlying message of this proverb guides our thinking for this chapter.

Our goal is to provide some guidelines to help you choose and assess training resources because we believe this is a far more valuable skill for you and your senior learners.

We will also examine the issue of copyright and intellectual property, and how they affect your choice of resources.

What you will learn

This chapter explores ways to:

- » understand how adults learn
- » respond to the individual training needs of seniors
- » locate and evaluate appropriate training resources for seniors
- » identify existing/potential resources
- » understand copyright and intellectual property rights.

The principles of adult learning

There is no single theory or model that explains everything we know about adult learners. However, there are some useful principles that we can draw on.

What we know is that adult learners:

- » are goal focussed
- » want their learning to be relevant and specific to their needs
- » demand respect and to be perceived as capable of learning
- » want their learning experience to recognise their life experience, ideas and skills
- » require learning that is practical and can be applied to their lives
- » are internally motivated.

For a more detailed description of the adult learning principles, visit the Adult Learning Australia website (www.ala.asn.au/adult-learning/).

Understanding the needs of your learners

As a tutor, you need to understand a person's reasons for wanting to learn as well as any barriers that might get in the way.

To find out, you can conduct a basic needs assessment. This might include a private discussion with the person before the session, where you invite them to tell you what they want to learn, their overall expectations and what prior experience and knowledge they already have. This will help you identify where and how to bridge the gap between the learner's current skill level and the skill level they want to achieve.

You can then use this information to plan your session. An older person's learning is immediately enhanced if they feel it is relevant to their needs and life – and the training resources you use should also reflect these same ideas.

Training and associated support materials that are irrelevant, developed for children or overly technical will not be well received by senior learners.

Structuring your training

Somewhere between 5 and 11% of information provided in lectures is retained by learners. Small group or individual sessions are much more effective. This is why the Broadband for Seniors model, which offers 'hands-on' training and one-on-one sessions, is an ideal combination.

Group sessions

You might find that some seniors are uncomfortable with group sessions. They may feel exposed; particularly if they have low digital literacy. Give them time to get to know each other and establish themselves in the group. It's a good idea to design group sessions to develop an atmosphere of trust so that seniors feel comfortable asking questions.

Respect people's experience and get them to share their ideas. More experienced seniors can get involved and help those who are less able. This is a good way to build strong relationships.

Interactive training with a practical focus that provides plenty of time for giving and receiving feedback is valuable.

Support your training with resources or materials that seniors can use at the kiosk or take home.

Finding good resources

It can be challenging to meet the needs of seniors particularly with technology because it constantly changes. Increasingly, seniors are bringing their own devices into kiosks for support, including Windows laptops, Mac Books, iPads, Android tablets and Internet-enabled smart phones. The wide array of apps, software, operating systems and the constant updates makes it even more complex.

This is why it's so important for tutors to know where they can get good support materials.

What is a good resource?

Training resources are not just books and guides. The most valuable resource is your volunteer tutors. Anything that helps you improve seniors' learning is a resource. They include a wide variety of materials and tools to help you teach including:

- » games, quizzes, and puzzles
- » exercises and case studies
- » examples, samples and templates
- » forms, manuals, guides
- » diagrams, pictures, cartoons
- » books, magazines, journals
- » videos, music, CDs/DVDs
- » websites and webpages

The best resources are those that help seniors learn quickly and easily.

Developing your own resources

Volunteer tutors who have a good relationship with their learners are often best placed to develop effective and relevant learning materials based on the needs of their senior learners. In fact, you have probably already done this on many occasions in your BFS kiosk.

Things to consider

Learning resources need to be designed to support the cognitive, sensory and physical effects of ageing, and to promote independence and the achievement of the older learner's full potential.

Cognitive function

Intellectual ability does not decline with ageing, but it does change. As the human brain ages, the rate that it receives and processes information slows. Older adults need more time to absorb new information and learning materials need to be organised differently.

Adults learn best by comparing past experience with new experience, so resources should be specific to the technology that the learner will be working with.

Memory issues

Older adults may have short-term memory issues, so effective training and support materials should include repetition of newly acquired skills and summaries of new information. In any one teaching session:

- » Limit information to 3 to 5 points.
- » Separate complex material into sequential topics.
- » Review and repeat essential information from the previous topic.

Managing multiple messages

Research indicates that some seniors find it difficult to manage multiple messages at one time, so resources should be short and succinct, maybe just highlighting the key points.

Drawing conclusions from inference

Older learners can find it harder to draw conclusions from inference. So keep instructions clear, avoid use of acronyms and give clear and specific directions. For example, when describing how to save a document, a good resource could suggest specific times to save, rather than simply indicating that work should be saved regularly.

Using accurate illustrations is also vital. Charts and tables are not as effective as they require the learner to draw conclusions from inference, and require interpretation skills that may deteriorate with age.

Repetition is vital, and examples that link to real life experience create the best opportunity for embedding new skills and knowledge.

Auditory and visual challenges

Older people can find it hard to read fine print and see colours at the blue/green end of the colour spectrum. They can also be more sensitive to glare and sudden changes in brightness.

As it takes longer for the eye to focus, seniors may find it hard to scan an area and focus on a particular object – highlighters and graphics may be helpful to focus attention on the key learning points. Similarly, moving objects may be difficult to see. This should be taken into account in resources that include video technology.

Conditions such as macular degeneration, glaucoma and cataracts have a significant affect on the learner's ability to see text-based resources clearly so consider using audio resources. Choose audio resources that focus on clear slow speech in a lower pitch.

Literacy issues

Don't assume that older learners have high-level reading skills. Research tell us that many people over 65 have low level functional literacy, which means they may have difficulties with tasks such as filling out forms or reading prescriptions (for more information refer to Chapter 5).

Australia is a multicultural community and many kiosks have a high proportion of seniors from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds, where English is not their first language (for more information refer to Chapter 4).

Physical challenges

As we age, we may be less able to manage our fine motor skills. A good online resource should not include too many links or drop down menus that may cause frustration if the learner does not have good fine motor skills for mouse control.

With printed resources, there are very few books that are created for IT skills in large print. Those that are tend to be very heavy and may be challenging for seniors to handle.

Access to technology

For many seniors, the Broadband for Seniors kiosks may be the only way they can access technology.

Limited funds

Many seniors, and some Broadband for Seniors kiosks, have limited funds for buying resources.

Online resources are often free, but you need to factor in any printing and photocopy costs. Many older learners want printed notes and to be able to take those notes away from the training session to review in their own time.

Locating appropriate training materials

Analyse training materials you plan to use to make sure they meet the needs of your learners.

Online resources

There are many advantages to using Internet-based resource material. You can find resources online that are:

- » from all over the world
- » in different formats, many of which are free – good examples include Goodwill Community Foundation International (www.gcflearnfree.org), and ForwardIT (www.forwardit.sa.gov.au) – these materials have an audio feature and are also downloadable in pdf format
- » in different languages – there are websites that offer technology modules in a variety of languages, including English; for example, Lerni (www.lerni.net.au)
- » up-to-date with the latest information, which is important with technology changing so frequently
- » visual with good quality images, illustrations and video; however, there may be some challenges for seniors in terms of rapid screen movement (see audio visual section)
- » easy to save using a CD, DVD or USB
- » accessible – settings, fonts, contrasts, sizes can be altered on computers to suit the needs of learners; for more on this download *Helping seniors with disabilities get online* from the COTA website (www.cotawa.org.au) for step-by-step assistance to help you enable the accessibility features on your computer or mobile device.

Internet resources do, however, come with some challenges:

- » Accuracy and currency can be an issue.
- » Users must have an Internet connection and the skills to access it. This is challenging for the beginner or unsupported user.
- » Users are restricted if there is a drop-out in the Internet connection.

Print materials

The benefits of print materials are:

- » portability
- » familiarity
- » easy to refer to when offline.

However, print materials:

- » can be expensive to produce
- » risk becoming outdated
- » do not involve the online skills you are teaching.

Evaluating appropriateness

Use the following check sheet to assess how appropriate the resource material you've identified is for an older learner.

Factors that affect learning - things to look for in learning materials

Adherence to principles of adult learning

- ☐ **Adults require learning to be relevant and meet their specific needs**
 - » The material is age appropriate and adapted to meet some of the physical and cognitive needs of the older learner.
 - » Adult learners demand respect and to be perceived as capable of learning.
 - » The tone of the material is respectful and aimed at older adults. Visual illustrations depicting older adults are positive.
- ☐ **Learning must recognise that adults have life experience, ideas and skills**
 - » The material encourages learners to relate the material to previous knowledge or experiences.
- ☐ **Adults are goal focussed**
 - » The resource describes up front and early what learners can expect to learn.
- ☐ **Adults require learning that is practical and can apply to their lives**
 - » The resource provides hands on activities that include problem solving and practical solutions to real life challenges.
- ☐ **Adults are internally motivated**
 - » The resource encourages learners to identify their goals and then measure progress towards those goals.

Auditory and visual challenges

- ☐ **Font and formatting**
 - » The font and formatting of material is user friendly. Fonts used are Sans serif such as Helvetica and Arial. Font size is at least 16 point. Italics, novelty and serif fonts are not used. A mix of case and bold fonts are used.

AaBbCc Sans-serif font

AaBbCc Serif font (serifs circled)
- » Formatting is user friendly.
- » Each visual representation addresses one idea.
- » Paper used is matte rather than glossy.
- » A straight left margin is used.
- ☐ **Colour**
 - » Designed so that colour and contrast assists readability.
 - » The resource avoids the blue/green spectrum.
- ☐ **Contrast**
 - » Black lettering on white background is the most effective.
 - » Highlighting is used for emphasis.
 - » Features plenty of white space.
 - » Avoids sepia tones if possible.
 - » Avoids patterned background.
- ☐ **Lighting of screen/room**
 - » Lighting in the venue reduces glare. Computer screen glare is effectively managed.
- ☐ **Use of video**
 - » Customisable to reduce light and glare.
- ☐ **Audio resources**
 - » Slow and distinct, clear tones, low frequency, deeper not necessarily louder. Short sentences, lots of repetition.
- ☐ **Illustrations**
 - » Good use of accurate clear images.
 - » Graphics are large and clear and easy to follow.

Cognitive

- ☐ **Organise material in small logical progression**
 - » Material is in small, defined sections with a clear pathway.
- ☐ **Supplement with paper-based materials**
 - » Learners can access a hard copy of online resource.
 - » Learning objectives are described at the beginning of each section.
 - » Jargon and acronyms are avoided.
- ☐ **Retention and short term memory issues**
 - » Repetition to emphasise significant points.
 - » Material is presented in logical sequence.
- ☐ **Knowledge transference**
 - » The resources are appropriate for the specific device the student is using.

Literacy

- ☐ **Functional literacy issues affect 65% of adults over 65**
 - » Materials have a balance of graphics and text, and use clear language.
- ☐ **Consider seniors from different ethnicities**
 - » Resources are available online in different languages.

Cost

- ☐ **Many seniors are on fixed income, and many kiosks also have limited funds for purchasing resources**
 - » Choose resources available on the Internet that are free to use and copy.

Motor skills

- ☐ **Medical conditions, as well as general ageing processes may impact the learner's motor skills.**
 - » In online sites, reduce the amount of drop-down menus.

Accessibility

- ☐ **Some seniors have disabilities**
 - » Resources should be able to hold their format when adapted by the accessibility functions on the PC, particularly with reference to font and contrast.

Currency

- ☐ **Resource matches the technology that the learner is using at the kiosk, as well as the technology they are using at home.**

Identifying existing resources

There are many excellent resources produced for Broadband for Seniors kiosks. For more information, go to the training resources section of the Broadband for Seniors website.

Other examples of excellent resources include those created by VICNET, these resources were created for the CALD Senior Surfers and Internet Training for People with a Disability programs.

The resources created by VICNET are published under the Creative Commons license and so can be adapted and reproduced for non-commercial purposes. Though VICNET is no longer creating new resources, the existing ones are still available on the BFS wiki: <http://bfsv.wikispaces.com>. However these will no longer be updated.

Australian Seniors Computer Clubs Association offers a list that might be valuable in finding resources: www.ascca.org.au/index.php/self-help-links.

Lerni resources (www.lerni.net.au) are available in eight languages other than English, including African and Middle Eastern languages. This resource was also licenced under the Creative Commons licence.

Your local library is a source of many books to support seniors learning. The publisher 'Read how you want' publishes books in large print, these are good quality, but tend to be very heavy and not always suitable for the older reader.

There is also the 'In Easy Steps' series of computers for seniors books, which are excellent resources particularly in reference to the sequencing and reminder cues of key points.

Understanding copyright and Intellectual property rights

Intellectual property is basically the property of your mind or proprietary knowledge, which can include designs, artistic works, documents and music.

Intellectual property is protected by the law of each country through a system of licences to enable developers to generate income or recognition for information that they have created. One of these licences is copyright; others include trademarks, and patents.

Most online training resources created for seniors utilise the Creative Commons licence. Creative Commons (www.creativecommons.org) is a worldwide not-for-profit organisation that provides copyright owners with free licences allowing them to share, reuse, and remix their material, legally.

You will recognise a resource licenced under the Creative Commons by the copyright statement at the end of the resource. The statement generally indicates that you are free to 'cite, copy, communicate and adapt' a work so long as you attribute the authors.

Often documents created under the Creative Commons licence are created by grant funding, and freely available (creativecommons.org.au/learn/fact-sheets/attribution/).



If you use resources created by others, even if they indicate that they may be freely used or adapted, it is important to recognise the creator.

The Australian Copyright Council has easy to read and understand fact sheets available on copyright available at: www.copyright.org.au.

Summary

In this chapter we explored ways to:

- » understand how adults learn
- » respond to the individual training needs of seniors
- » locate and evaluate appropriate training resources for seniors
- » identify existing/potential resources
- » understand copyright and intellectual property rights.

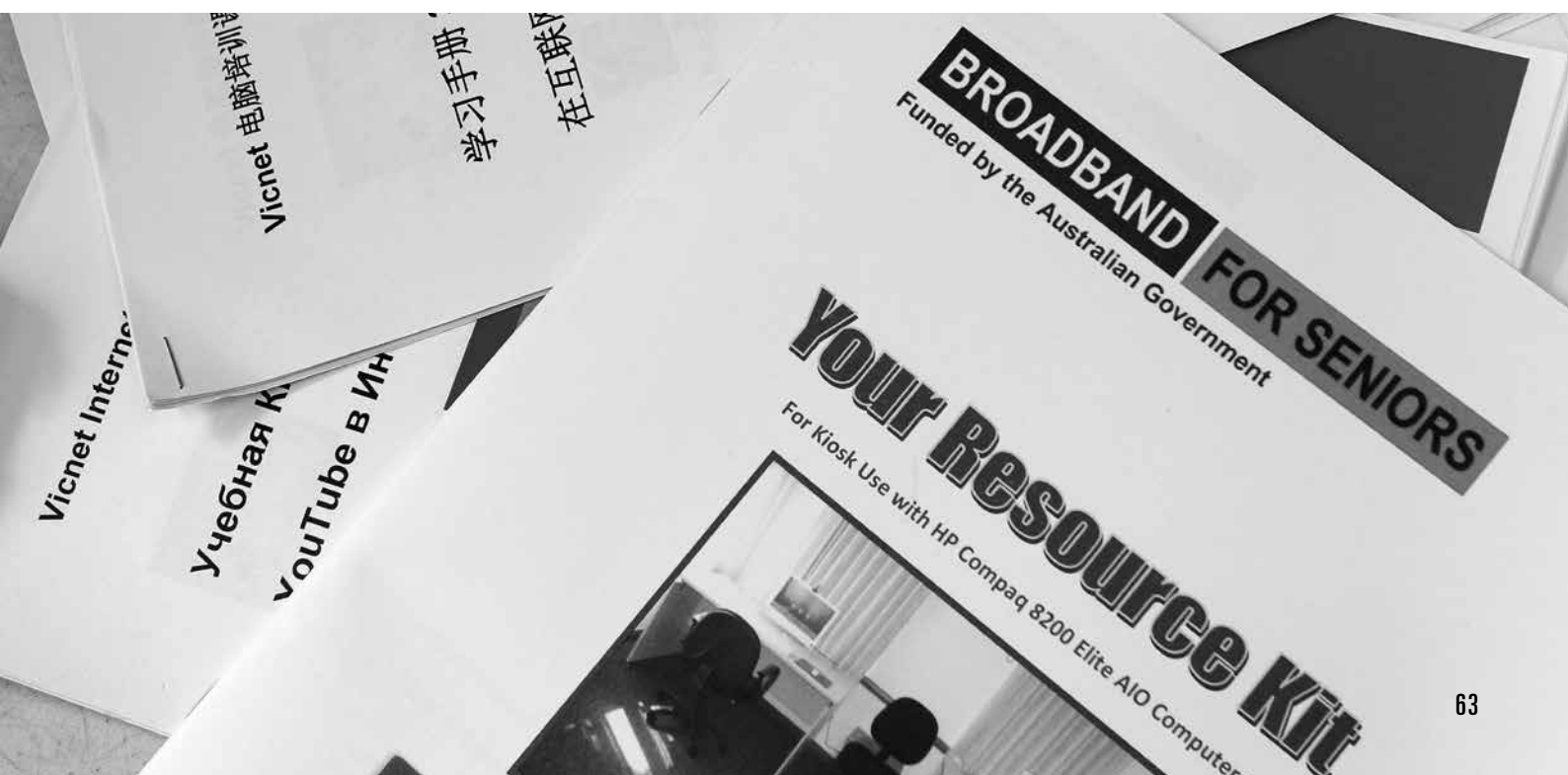
There is a wide array of learning resources available but choosing which ones are going to be the best for your older learners can be challenging as there are so many resources, and each learner's needs are different.

By identifying the physical and cognitive needs of your learners and taking into account adult learning principles, you can more confidently choose the right materials.

Developing the skills to understand what makes a resource valuable for your learners will save your kiosk considerable time and money, and most importantly will earn the trust of your learners.

Although working with older people can be very rewarding, great fun and stimulating – it can also be hard work. Consider your boundaries and be clear about them. For example, think about whether or not you want your older learners to be able to contact you after hours.

You need to recognise when things are getting too much. Remember to take a break or find someone to talk to.



WOODRISING NEIGHBOURHOOD CENTRE

Keith Harvey volunteers at Woodrising Neighbourhood Centre Kiosk. Computers have always fascinated him but his technology skills are not what make him such a good tutor. It's his empathy, enthusiasm and generous nature. He likes to tinker and is relentlessly curious – all of which help to him keep abreast of changes in technology.

'We run four Broadband for Seniors sessions a week and there is never any shortage of participants. In fact, we have a waiting list. We find that once they come along it opens up their world and they are itching to come back for more,' says Keith.

Building your foundations

'You don't have to be an expert or geek to tutor seniors. As a tutor, I think of knowledge as a brick wall. You can't place bricks in mid air – you need to build your foundations,' he explains.

At Woodrising, they make a point of establishing the skill level of each senior. They achieve this through a process of observation and questioning.

'I ring each senior first and talk to them to get an idea of what their needs are. I try to find out where they're at and what their target is,' he says.

Rating their knowledge

Seniors are asked to rate themselves using a skills sheet. This information helps the tutors design a learning program that best meets their needs.

Keith is fully aware of what's available to him in terms of support resources. He uses

the Internet to locate good quality online tutorials. He also contributes and share resources with other volunteer tutors via the Broadband for Seniors wiki.

'Many seniors like handouts and help sheets. They like their information in logical steps.'

Gathering feedback

At Woodrising they have print materials to complement the online training they use, which includes a feedback mechanism after each module.

'This helps us figure out what they've learnt. It also helps them to retain the information between the classroom training,' says Keith.

Keith believes that the best way to ensure your support materials are effective is to get someone who knows nothing about the subject to evaluate them.

'Memory retention is also an issue. Overcoming fear and convincing them that while they are on a steep learning curve – there is light at the end of the tunnel. It's just a matter of explaining the terms and convincing them that they can do it. All of a sudden it clicks.'

He is an active member of the Broadband for Seniors Google Group, which enables members to share information and overcome Internet or computer problems.

'Patience and listening skills are the most important. And as for reward – money can't buy the joy of seeing the lights go on in an 80-year-old set of eyes and the smile that they can do it. Plus it's a very poor day tutoring when you don't learn something yourself.'

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